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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 131448Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4571
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1278
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1115
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WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: ELECTIONS UPDATE

REF: A. PAP 2105
[B.](#) PAP 1846

[¶](#)1. Summary. Elections preparations are on track and the Provisionary Electoral Council (CEP) is completing its checklist of remaining tasks, according to CEP Director General Jacques Bernard. CEP has taken over the primary role of implementing the elections but remain in daily contact with MINUSTAH on logistics. The prime minister and the minister of interior acknowledged the good news but stressed the importance of voter education and transparency. The Director General of the CEP responded to these concerns, stating that the CEP maintained neutrality throughout the process and favored no political party. Transparency has become a large issue on the heels of an international report calling Haiti the most corrupt nation in the world and a CEP accounting review finding irregularities in their spending. The pressure is on both the CEP and the executive to make this process open and transparent to prove to the international community they can enter into democracy autonomously. End Summary.

Election Preparations are on Schedule

[¶](#)2. (U) Bernard reported to the Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet, SRSG Edmond Mulet, and the international community on November 7 that all electoral preparations were on schedule. Bernard rattled off items that had been completed; voting centers, voter lists, electoral boundary limits, and poll worker trainer training. All voting materials for 9 departments had been delivered from the Dominican Republic and materials for the last department, the West would be delivered on the following Monday. According to Bernard, all other remaining tasks for election day have started and he anticipate &no problem at all8 for the December 3 election.

[¶](#)3. (U) SRSG Mulet agreed that everything was in place. MINUSTAH officers now have daily meetings with CEP officials regarding logistics. This week, the CEP gave MINUSTAH the addresses of the 28 new voting centers and his officers were in the process of identifying and securing the locations. Mulet also reported that there was ample military presence in each department. From his perspective, the only item remaining for MINUSTAH was coordination with the Haitian National Police (HNP). Mulet planned to meet with Director General of the HNP Mario Andresol the following week to

discuss HNP assistance with election day security.

No Gaps in the Budget

¶4. (U) The Canadians and Brazilians have disbursed their promised funds, approximately \$4 million USD and exactly \$1 million USD, respectively. The Japanese have promised approximately \$800,000 USD after they receive an explanation of how the funds would be used. And, the GoH would also contribute \$1.5 million USD. Together with funds from the USG and the EU, the \$16.9 million dollar budget has been met.

(Note: The status of the money from the EU was not discussed during the Prime Minister's meeting but it is well known that these funds will not be disbursed prior to the elections (ref A) End Note.)

CEP takes on role as Chief Implementer

¶5. (SBU) Argentinean Ambassador Ernesto Justo Lopez asked for clarification on the role of MINUSTAH versus the CEP during this round of elections. (Note: There has been an ongoing tension between the Electoral Assistance Section (EAS) of MINUSTAH and the CEP. EAS Director was recently given a new position within MINUSTAH to relieve some tensions between the two organizations. However, EAS personnel remain sensitive, feeling sidelined from the technical aspects of the elections process. (ref B) End Note.) Mulet explained that MINUSTAH was no longer responsible for the technical aspects of the election as it had been in the previous rounds. Bernard reiterated that the CEP was responsible for these elections. In his view, the transfer of all technical knowledge had already been done and that the CEP was simply assuming its

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proper responsibility. Canadian Ambassador Claude Boucher agreed and stressed that this transfer was something that the international community had envisioned from the beginning, that the Haitians drive their own democratic process.

Voter Education Urged

¶6. (U) The Minister of Interior Paul Bien-Aime raised the issue of the electorate's awareness of voting centers in the newly defined voting zones (ref A). According to Bien-Aime, a few of the political parties have complained that the location of the voting centers gave advantage to certain candidates. Bernard acknowledged that political parties were complaining but responded that the CEP had selected voting centers that were as neutral as possible. He told Bien-Aime that he could not satisfy all political parties but only strive for neutrality. Parliamentarians were making demands for candidates in their party and there would be requests for changes until the last minute but the CEP would hold to its plan.

¶7. (U) Bernard said that voters would be familiar with the ballots because they are similar to the ballots of the first two rounds. The ballots for local and municipal elections will contain no candidate photos. In place of photos, the names of the candidates comprising the rural administrative municipalities (CASEC and ASECS) will appear. Political party logos, as before, would be displayed under the names.

Transparency Required

¶8. (SBU) The Prime Minister stressed the importance of transparency during this election. Observers would be permitted but everyone, including parliamentarians and VIPs, must have proper identification to enter the voting areas. The Prime Minister, clearly concerned about public image of the elections, said that voter response in February was a display of Haitian will and that voters would not accept the

same situation of uncertainty and lack of transparency. He urged the CEP to announce the results quickly because if not, it would expose the country to flare ups and other insecurities.⁸ At the same time, he expressed bemusement in the recent results of the Transparency International study, finding Haiti the most corrupt nation in the world, given that his government was recently installed. Thus, they had a burden⁸ to show we are different.⁸

¶19. (U) Bernard expected several groups of electoral observers for the local and municipal elections. There will be a contingent of Canadian observers, members from the Haiti Democratic Project, and numerous domestic groups that had registered as observers.

CEP Accounting Irregularities

¶11. (U) The Superior Court of Accounts and Administrative Litigation published a report on November 6 concerning the accounting practices of the CEP. The report stated that there are accounting irregularities in the disbursement of funds of the CEP amounting to 4 million Haitian gourdes (approximately \$ 400,000 USD). President Max Mathurin has not publicly addressed these allegations. During the meeting on November 7, however, he told the Prime Minister that he intended to give him a full report.

¶12. (SBU) Comment: Despite EAS dissatisfaction with technical aspects of the election, the latest corruption scandal, and rumors that Preval does not want local elections because they could ignite local violence, voters will go to the polls on December 3. CEP and MINUSTAH are prepared and money is the UNDP coffers. The CEP is ready to prove that they have the expertise to implement elections. Transparency has become a large issue on the heels of an international report calling Haiti the most corrupt nation in the world and a CEP accounting review finding irregularities in their spending. The pressure is on both the CEP and the executive to make this process open and transparent to prove to the international community they can administer their own elections. End Comment.

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